

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A server computer for electronically introducing alternative merchandise information after closing an electrical auction for an exhibited item of merchandise, said server computer connected through a network to a plurality of terminals ~~which participate in an~~ each associated with a bidder in the auction for the exhibited item of merchandise, said server computer comprising:

a merchandise database ~~storing~~ configured to store a plurality of merchandise information;

means for selecting the alternative merchandise information from said merchandise database based on a basis of provided bid information of a participant an unsuccessful bidder in the auction for the exhibited item of merchandise, the alternative merchandise information being information concerning an unexhibited item of merchandise that was not exhibited in the auction, and the unsuccessful bidder being a bidder in the auction who did not win the exhibited item; and

means for causing to notify a terminal associated with the unsuccessful bidder of the selected merchandise information as alternative merchandise information to a terminal, wherein said selecting means selects the merchandise information except for a successful bidder concerning the unexhibited item of merchandise.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The server computer of claim 1, ~~wherein said selecting means comprises~~ further comprising:

means for extracting preference information based on a basis of stored bid information of a bidder and exhibited merchandise information bid on by the bidder; and

means for selecting alternative merchandise information based on a ~~basis~~ of the preference information.

Claim 3 (Canceled).

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A server computer for electronically introducing alternative merchandise information after closing an electrical auction for an exhibited item of merchandise, said server computer connected through a network to a plurality of terminals which participate in an each associated with a bidder in the auction for the exhibited item of merchandise, said server computer comprising:

an auction execution unit configured to hold ~~an the~~ electronic auction, said auction execution unit comprising, a providing module configured to provide information regarding the exhibited item of merchandise ~~information~~ for the auction to the terminals, and a receiving module configured to receive bid information, which includes bid information indicating a bidder from the terminals and configured to store the bid information;

a merchandise database ~~storing~~ configured to store a plurality of merchandise information;

means for selecting the alternative merchandise information from the merchandise database based on a ~~basis~~ of the stored bid information of a ~~bidder~~ an unsuccessful bidder in the auction for the exhibited item of merchandise, the alternative merchandise information being information concerning an unexhibited item of merchandise that was not exhibited in the auction, and the unsuccessful bidder being a bidder who did not win the exhibited item in the auction; and

means for causing to notify a terminal associated with the unsuccessful bidder of the selected merchandise information as alternative merchandise information to a terminal,
~~wherein said selecting means selects the merchandise information except for a successful bidder~~ concerning the unexhibited item of merchandise.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The server computer of claim 4, ~~wherein said selecting means comprises~~ further comprising:

means for extracting preference information based on a basis of the stored bid
information ~~stored for of~~ a bidder and the exhibited merchandise information bid on by the bidder[[,]]; and

means for selecting the alternative merchandise information based on a basis of the
preference information.

Claim 6 (Canceled).

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A server computer for electronically introducing
alternative merchandise information after closing an electrical auction for an exhibited item
of merchandise, said server computer connected through a network to a plurality of terminals
~~which participate~~ each associated with a bidder in the auction for the exhibited item of
merchandise, said server computer comprising:

means for extracting preference information based on a basis of bid information
stored for ~~a~~ an unsuccessful bidder who did not win the exhibited item of merchandise in the
auction and exhibited merchandise information concerning the exhibited item of merchandise
bid on by the unsuccessful bidder;

means for causing a communication unit to transmit the preference information to an exhibitor, ~~wherein said extracting means extracts the merchandise information except for a successful bidder~~ configured to select the alternative merchandise information for the unsuccessful bidder based on the preference information, the alternative merchandise information being information concerning an unexhibited item of merchandise that was not exhibited in the auction.

Claim 8 (Canceled).

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A server computer for electronically introducing alternative merchandise information after closing an electrical auction for an exhibited item of merchandise, said server computer connected through a network to a plurality of terminals ~~which participate in the auction~~ each associated with a bidder in the auction for the exhibited item of merchandise, said server computer comprising:

a storage unit ~~storing~~ configured to store bid information;

means for extracting preference information based on the ~~basis of~~ bid information stored for a ~~an~~ unsuccessful bidder in the auction for the exhibited item of merchandise and information concerning the exhibited item of merchandise ~~information~~ bid on by the bidder, the unsuccessful bidder being a bidder in the auction who did not win the exhibited item;

means for associating the preference information and the bid information and for storing ~~same~~ the associated preference and bid information;

means for receiving the alternative merchandise information selected by an exhibitor, the alternative merchandise information being information concerning an unexhibited item of merchandise that was not exhibited in the auction;

means for causing to notify a terminal associated with the unsuccessful bidder of the alternative merchandise information as ~~alternative merchandise to a terminal on a basis of~~ concerning the unexhibited item of merchandise based on the associated preference and bid information and bid information, wherein said extracting means extracts the merchandise information except for a successful bidder.

Claim 10 (Canceled).

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A server computer for electronically introducing alternative merchandise information after closing an electrical auction for an exhibited item of merchandise, said server computer connected through a network to a plurality of terminals which participate each associated with a bidder in the auction for the exhibited item of merchandise, said server computer comprising:

means for extracting preference information based on a basis of bid information stored for a-an unsuccessful bidder in the auction for the exhibited item of merchandise in the auction and exhibited merchandise information concerning the exhibited item of merchandise bid on by the unsuccessful bidder;

means for causing a communication unit to transmit the preference information to an exhibitor;

means for receiving the alternative merchandise information for the unsuccessful bidder selected by the exhibitor based on the preference information, the alternative merchandise information being information concerning an unexhibited item of merchandise that was not exhibited in the auction;

means for causing to notify a terminal associated with the unsuccessful bidder of the alternative merchandise information as ~~alternative merchandise to a terminal except for a successful bidder~~ concerning the unexhibited item of merchandise.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): A server computer for electronically introducing alternative merchandise information after closing an electrical auction for an exhibited item of merchandise, said server computer connected through a network to a plurality of terminals which participate each associated with a bidder in the auction for the exhibited item of merchandise, said server computer comprising:

means for holding the auction electronically, said auction holding means, comprising,
means for providing exhibited merchandise information for the auction to the terminals, and
means for receiving bid information, which includes information indicating a bidder, from the terminals and for storing the bid information;

means for extracting preference information based on a ~~basis of~~ bid information stored for a ~~an unsuccessful bidder in the auction for the exhibited item of merchandise and exhibited merchandise information concerning the exhibited item of merchandise~~ bid on by the unsuccessful bidder being a bidder who did not win the exhibited item in the auction;

means for causing a communication unit to transmit the preference information to an exhibitor;

means for receiving the alternative merchandise information selected by the exhibitor, the alternative merchandise information concerning an unexhibited item of merchandise that was not exhibited in the auction;

means for causing to notify a terminal associated with the unsuccessful bidder of the alternative merchandise information as ~~alternative merchandise to the terminal except for a~~

~~successful bidder~~ concerning the unexhibited item of merchandise and based on the preference information stored for the unsuccessful bidder.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): A method of electronically introducing alternative merchandise information to a ~~participant bidding an unsuccessful bidder~~ in an electronic auction for an exhibited item of merchandise after closing the electronic auction, in a system including a server computer connected through a network to a plurality of terminals ~~which participate~~ each associated with a bidder in the auction for an exhibited item of merchandise, said method comprising:

selecting the alternative merchandise information from a plurality of merchandise information based on a basis of bid information ~~bid by a participant of the unsuccessful bidder,~~ the alternative merchandise information being information concerning an unexhibited item of merchandise not exhibited in the auction; and

causing to transmit the selected alternative merchandise information regarding the unexhibited merchandise ~~as alternative merchandise~~ to a terminal ~~except for a successful~~ associated with the unsuccessful bidder.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 13, wherein said selecting step comprises:

extracting preference information based on a basis of the bid information and exhibited merchandise information bid on by the ~~participant~~ unsuccessful bidder; and

selecting the alternative merchandise information from the plurality of merchandise information based on a basis of the preference information ~~from the plurality of merchandise information.~~

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A method of electronically introducing alternative merchandise information after closing an electronic auction for an exhibited item of merchandise, said method comprising:

providing exhibited merchandise information for the auction to terminals of participants, receiving bid information, which includes information indicating each participant from the terminals;

storing the bid information;

selecting the alternative merchandise information from a plurality of merchandise information based on a basis of the stored bid information, the alternative merchandise information concerning an unexhibited merchandise not exhibited in the auction; and

causing to transmit the alternative selected merchandise information ~~as alternative merchandise concerning the unexhibited merchandise~~ to a terminal of ~~a-an unsuccessful~~ participant who did not win the exhibited item of merchandise in the auction except for a successful bidder.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 15, wherein said selecting step comprises:

extracting preference information based on a basis of the bid information and exhibited merchandise information bid on by ~~a-the unsuccessful~~ participant; and

selecting the alternative merchandise information from the plurality of merchandise information based on a basis of the preference information from the plurality of merchandise information.

Claim 17 (Canceled).

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): A method of electronically introducing alternative merchandise information after closing an electrical auction for an exhibited item of merchandise, said method comprising:

storing bid information;

extracting preference information based on a ~~basis of~~ bid information stored for a ~~an~~ unsuccessful bidder and exhibited merchandise information bid on by the unsuccessful bidder, the unsuccessful bidder being a bidder in the auction who did not win the exhibited item of merchandise;

associating the ~~reference preference~~ information and the bid information and storing same the associated preference and bid information;

receiving the alternative merchandise information selected by an exhibitor, the alternative merchandise information being information concerning an unexhibited item of merchandise not exhibited in the auction, and

causing to notify a terminal associated with the unsuccessful bidder of the alternative merchandise information as ~~alternative merchandise to a terminal except for a successful bidder on a basis of~~ concerning the unexhibited item of merchandise based on the associated preference and bid information and bid information.

Claim 19 (Original): A computer program product comprising a computer storage medium having a computer program code mechanism embedded in the computer storage medium configured to perform the steps recited in any one of claims 13-18.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): An auction system[[,]] comprising:

a plurality of terminals offering bids for exhibited merchandise information concerning an exhibited item of merchandise exhibited in an electronic auction; and
a server computer connected to the plurality of terminals through a network[[,]] and configured to hold the auction, said server[[,]] including, a providing module providing the exhibited merchandise information to the terminals, a receiving module receiving bid information, which includes information indicating a bidder from the terminals and storing the bid information;

a merchandise database storing a plurality of merchandise information;
means for selecting alternative merchandise information from the merchandise database based on ~~a basis of~~ stored bid information for ~~a~~ an unsuccessful bidder who did not win the exhibited item of merchandise in the auction, the alternative merchandise information being information concerning an unexhibited item of merchandise not exhibited in the auction; and

means for causing to notify a terminal associated with the unsuccessful bidder of the alternative selected merchandise information as alternative merchandise to a terminal of the bidder except for a successful bidder concerning the unexhibited merchandise.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): ~~Are~~ An auction system[[,]] comprising:

a plurality of terminals offering a bid on exhibited merchandise information concerning an exhibited item of merchandise exhibited in an electronic auction;

a terminal of an exhibitor of the exhibited item; and

a server computer, connected to the plurality of terminals and the terminal of the exhibitor through a network[[,]] and configured to hold ~~an~~ the auction, said server[[,]]

including, means for providing exhibited merchandise information for the auction to the terminals, and means for receiving bid information, which includes information indicating a bidder from the terminals and for storing the bid information, means for extracting preference information based on a basis of the stored bid information of the an unsuccessful bidder[[,]] who did not win the exhibited item in the auction and the exhibited merchandise information bid on by the unsuccessful bidder;

means for causing a communication unit to transmit a preference information to the exhibitor;

means for receiving an alternative merchandise information selected by exhibitor, the alternative merchandise information being information concerning an unexhibited item of merchandise not exhibited in the auction;

means for causing to notify the unsuccessful bidder of the alternative merchandise information as an alternative merchandise to the terminal except for a successful bidder concerning the unexhibited item of merchandise.